

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB-6355

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Ann Rosenbaum, I am from Stamford and a supporter of CT Against Gun Violence. I am a retired family therapist, and an active member of Women On Watch, a grass-roots advocacy group in Stamford that has been active for over 13 years. From our earliest days focus on the prevention of gun violence on local, state and national levels has been one of our major advocacy issues.

I am testifying in favor of the passage of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders.

As a licensed family therapist, first in Illinois and later in CT, I have worked with depresses clients who talked of suicide. The protocol when a client shares that information is to determine what their plan is and do they have the means available to carry it out. One of the questions I would always ask is do they have access to a fire arm. If so, that information “raises the stakes” on their ability to carry out their intention/threat considerably! In a case like this, having the ability to directly petition the court for a risk protection order as a last resort, either as a health care professional, or as a family member can save lives.

The current data regarding suicides during what is a period of crisis for many families is staggering! Up to two thirds of CT gun deaths are by suicide. I believe that Extreme Risk Protection Orders are an effective last resort means – with due process protections – to temporarily remove a gun or guns from someone at imminent risk of suicide. Or if that person does not have a firearm, a protective order could be issued to prevent that individual from purchasing one.

As you well know CT was the first state to implement an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) in 1919 after a mass shooting at the CT Lottery headquarters by a man whose friends knew he was suicidal – and they knew he had guns at home. They had reported this to the police, but at that time the police had no power to remove his fire arms.

ERPOs save lives. Claims of opponents that ERP laws violate due process have no merit. According to the Giffords Law Center, no court has invalidated an extreme risk protection order or risk-warrant law. Courts in CT, Indiana, and Florida that have heard challenges to extreme risk protection order or risk-warrant laws have held that the laws do not violate the due process rights of respondents and/or are constitutional under the Second Amendment.

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protections law so the it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ann Rosenbaum

Stamford, CT